

H&H

H A N D E L & H A Y D N S O C I E T Y

Christopher Hogwood, Artistic Director



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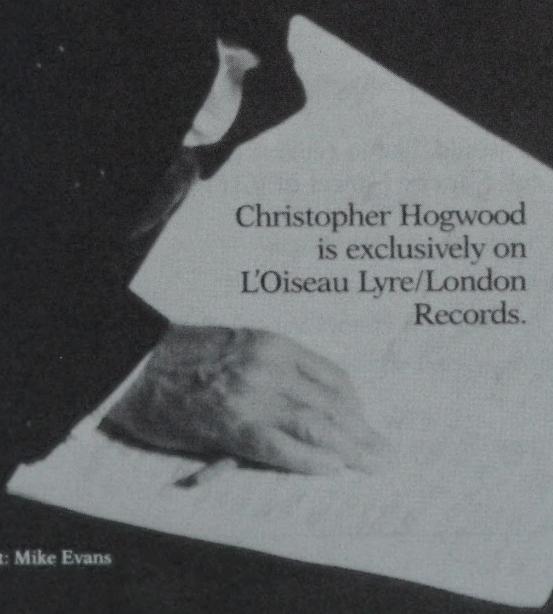
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CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD

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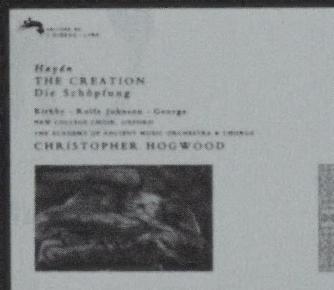
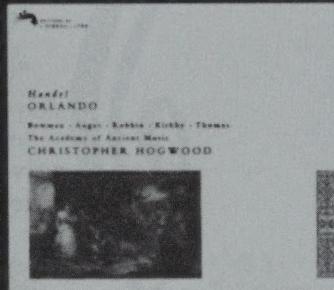


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"Paris in the Twenties"

featuring
a five-course sumptuous French dinner
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a performance by a 1920s jazz ensemble,
a dancer in the style of Josephine Baker,
and our distinctive silent auction.

Saturday, February 22, 1992
at 7:00 pm

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Handel & Haydn Society
Christopher Hogwood, Artistic Director
One Hundred Seventy-seventh Season

1991-1992 CONCERT SERIES AT SYMPHONY HALL

Friday, December 6, 1991 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 7, 1991 at 3 p.m.

Sunday, December 8, 1991 at 3 p.m.

Wednesday, December 11, 1991 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, December 13, 1991 at 7:30 p.m.

Symphony Hall, Boston

John Nelson, Conductor

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

MESSIAH, A SACRED ORATORIO

Part the First

INTERMISSION

Part the Second

PAUSE

Part the Third

Soloists:

Virginia Sublett, *soprano*

Michael Chance, *countertenor*

Jon Humphrey, *tenor*

Herbert Eckhoff, *bass-baritone*

The audience is politely requested not to stand during the "Hallelujah" Chorus.

This concert is being recorded by WBUR 90.9 FM.

The Handel & Haydn Society is supported in part by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



Christopher Hogwood, *Artistic Director*

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SEVENTH SEASON, 1991-1992

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OVERSEERS

JOHN NELSON, CONDUCTOR



John Nelson is Music Director of the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and a busy guest conductor with engagements around the world. He has led some of the world's greatest orchestras, including the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Dresden Staatskapelle, Czech Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic,

and the London Philharmonic. This past summer, he joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra for two concerts at Tanglewood and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for two concerts at the Hollywood Bowl. Opera has always figured strongly in Mr. Nelson's interests. He has led productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels, and Carnegie Hall, as well as numerous productions with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, where he has served as Music Director for 10 years. Mr. Nelson recently signed a long-term recording contract with Virgin Classics which includes the Verdi *Requiem* as well as works by Berlioz. He recorded Handel's *Semele* for Deutsche Grammophon, a baroque album for Sony Classical, Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict* for Erato, and Bach arias with Kathleen Battle and Itzhak Perlman for EMI. In addition to leading H&H in *Messiah* this season, Mr. Nelson will perform that work with the San Francisco Symphony.

VIRGINIA SUBLETT, SOPRANO



Virginia Sublett is a principal soprano with the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, and has performed with the New York City Opera, San Diego Opera, Central City Opera, and L'Opera de Nice. As a concert artist, she has performed with the San Diego Symphony, the Pacific Chorale in Costa Mesa, with the Redlands

Symphony, and the New Jersey Symphony. At home in the early music repertoire, Ms. Sublett has sung with City Musick in Chicago, the Phoenix Bach Society, and appears frequently as a soloist with the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, among others.

MICHAEL CHANCE, COUNTERTENOR



Michael Chance is one of the world's most sought-after countertenors, and has performed with the Paris Opera, Opera de Lyon, the Netherlands Opera, and at the Innsbruck and Glyndebourne Festivals. He has made more than 30 recordings, including Handel's *Messiah* with Trevor Pinnock (on DG-Archiv) and *Carmina Burana* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra on EMI.

JON HUMPHREY, TENOR



Jon Humphrey is on the forefront of oratorio tenors, and has performed in most of the major music centers around the United States. He is also a leading teacher of singing and holds a named professorship at the University of Massachusetts. Mr. Humphrey has recorded for RCA Victor, Decca, Orion, Telarc, and CBS Records. He performed with H&H last season as the Evangelist in Bach's *St. John Passion*, and in 1987 in *Messiah*.

HERBERT ECKHOFF, BASS-BARITONE



Bass-baritone Herbert Eckhoff has performed in opera, symphony, and oratorio styles with groups throughout the nation, including New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, Oregon Bach Festival, and Denver Symphony, among many others. He recently

performed the role of Jesus in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Rotterdam Philharmonic.

MESSIAH: SACRED OR SECULAR?

The intensity and speed with which Handel wrote *Messiah* has become legendary. According to the original manuscript, Handel began composing on Saturday, August 22, 1741. By Friday the 28th, he had drafted Part I. Part II was written by Sunday, September 6, and Part III completed on Saturday, September 12. Handel then took two days to fill in the orchestration of the whole. The oratorio was finished on Monday, September 14, 24 days after it was begun. For some, this speed revealed divine inspiration.

DIVINE INSPIRATION

According to one late 18th-century author, Handel is said to have refused food and alternated between weeping and praying during the composition of *Messiah*. At the conclusion of the "Hallelujah" Chorus, he is reported to have said, "I think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself." This story, however, contradicts much that we know about Handel and his typical work habits. He, like most 18th-century composers, including Mozart, wrote music quickly with little preparatory work.

The librettist for Handel's first great London opera, *Rinaldo* (1711), actually blames Handel's speed for his own inadequacies: "Mr. Handel, the Orpheus of our century, while composing the music, scarcely gave me the time to write, and to my great wonder I saw an entire Opera put to music by that surprising genius, with the greatest degree of perfection, in only two weeks." Not only was *Messiah* written in little more than three weeks, but Handel was so little spent that after only about a week's rest, he launched into the composition of *Samson* which he finished by October 29. The picture of Handel weeping, "staring into eternity," and refusing food is simply incompatible with the speed with which the work was written (it would be difficult enough to copy all of the notes of *Messiah* in three weeks, much less to conceive them), with Handel's ability to repeat the process immediately with the great oratorio *Samson*, and with Handel's known composing process for other works, including secular operas.

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MUSICAL BORROWING

If the composing process itself does not single out *Messiah* as a work of spiritual rapture, it must be admitted the music also betrays secular influence. Five movements ("His yoke is easy," "And he shall purify," "O Death, where is thy sting?," "For unto us a child is born," and "All we like sheep") are based in large part on four Italian love duets, two of which Handel wrote in 1710 and two that he wrote as late as July of 1741. Further, the opening vocal gestures of "Comfort ye, my people," can be found in a number of Handelian works including the 1707 cantata *Aure soave* ("Care luci") and the 1707 opera *Rodrigo* ("Egli è tuo"). There are few borrowings from other composers in *Messiah*, but one such is the accompaniment to "Thou shalt break them": it derives from the opera *Numitore* of 1720 by Giovanni Porta that had opened the Royal Academy of Music in London. None of the known musical borrowings in *Messiah* come from sacred sources.

Although the *Messiah* borrowings first came to light at the end of the nineteenth century, the oratorio was even earlier attacked for mixing sacred text and secular performances. One author wrote before

the first London performance in 1743: "An Oratorio either is an act of Religion, or it is not; if it is, I ask if the Playhouse is a fit Temple to perform it in, or a Company of Players fit Ministers of God's Word.... In the other Case, if it is not performed as an Act of Religion, but for Diversion and Amusement only (and indeed I believe few or none go to an Oratorio out of Devotion), what a Prophanation of God's name and Word is this, to make so light Use of them?"

SACRED VS. SECULAR

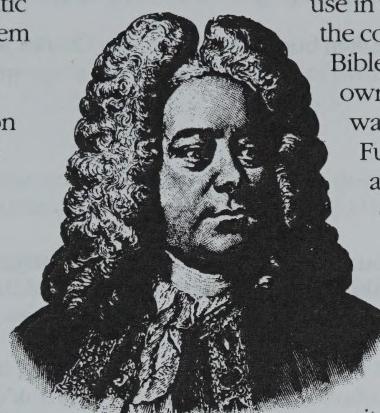
The question then as now is whether the sacred and secular can be so neatly partitioned. If the 19th-century sensibility was outraged that Handel could use the music he had set to the words (translated from the Italian) "No, I must not trust you, blind love, cruel beauty! You are such false and alluring goddesses," for the chorus "For unto us a child is born," it tended to overlook that its century

had also taken Handel's operatic arias and regularly retexted them with sacred words for use in church: the most famous example being the transformation of Xerxes's aria expressing his admiration for a plane tree ("ombra mai fù": sometimes known incorrectly today as "Handel's Largo") to "Thanks be to God."

As far as the place of performance and the morals of the singers are concerned, however, the 18th century was not without voices defending Handel's choice. One "Gentleman," responding to the criticisms above, asserted that it was a "trivial Argument" to say that "the Theatre (is) not fit for Praise Divine," and concluded that "To Harmony, like (Handel's), Celestial Pow'r is giv'n, T'extalt the Soul from Earth, and make, of Hell, a heav'n." Indeed, at the first performance in Dublin, it is reported that at the singing of "He was despised" by Mrs. Cibber, one audience member stood up and exclaimed, "Woman, for this, be all thy sins forgiven." Not the place, nor the performer, but the power of the combined words and music made this well-known London actress a "fit Minister of God's Word."

"A FINE ENTERTAINMENT"

It is accepted fact that Handel (despite his temper and voracious appetite) was a devout man. He was, apparently, a regular church-goer. Further, when the Bishop of London offered in 1727 to select appropriate Biblical texts for Handel to



use in the Coronation Anthems for George II, the composer responded that he knew the Bible as well as anyone and would choose his own texts. Handel was also charitable. He was one of the earliest supporters of the Fund for the Support of Decayed Musicians and their Families (founded 1738), now called the Royal Society of Musicians, that provided pensions for elderly and infirm musicians and their families. The very first performance of *Messiah* (April 12, 1742) was given for charity: "for Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's-street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay," for each of which £127 was raised. The London performance of *Messiah* in 1749 began his association with the Foundling Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children, for whom the work was thereafter performed every year.

In the end, the range and power of Handel's *Messiah* renders unnecessary all arguments about the secular or sacred nature of this work. Its librettist, Charles Jennens, referred to it as a "fine Entertainment." One aristocratic listener at the first London performance referred to it as a "noble entertainment." But *Messiah* does not just entertain. As Handel is quoted to have said, "My lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them, I wish to make them better."

—Ellen Harris

Ellen Harris is Associate Provost for the Arts at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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Jeffrey Stevens and Donald Wilkinson, *basses*

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

Original English text taken from the Scriptures by Charles Jennens

PART THE FIRST

Sinfony

Recitative, accompanied (Tenor)

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Aria (Tenor)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crook'd straight and the rough places plain.

Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Recitative, accompanied (Bass)

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns and the earth, the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in, behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Aria (Countertenor)

But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

Chorus

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Recitative (Countertenor)

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, "God With Us".

Aria and Chorus (Countertenor)

O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get Thee up into the high mountain; O Thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up Thy voice with strength: lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God! Arise, shine, for Thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon Thee.

Recitative, accompanied (Bass)

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon Thee, and His glory shall be seen upon Thee. And the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising.

Aria (Bass)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Chorus

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called: Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace!

Pifa

Recitative, accompanied (Soprano)

He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of thy people was He stricken.

Recitative (Soprano)

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Arioso (Soprano)

But lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

Recitative (Soprano)

And the angel said unto them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Recitative, accompanied (Soprano)

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heav'nly host, praising God, and saying:

Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men.

Aria (Soprano)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

Recitative (Countertenor)

Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

Duet (Countertenor and Soprano)

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: and He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him all ye that labor, that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Chorus

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

PART THE SECOND

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

Aria (Countertenor)

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

Chorus

Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

Chorus

And with His stripes we are healed.

Chorus

All we like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned ev'ry one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Recitative, accompanied (Tenor)

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:

Chorus

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.

Recitative, accompanied (Tenor)

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart, He is full of heaviness: He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

Arioso (Tenor)

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

Aria (Soprano)

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell, nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

Chorus

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts: He is the King of glory.

Recitative (Tenor)

Unto which of the angels said He at any time: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee?

Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship him.

Aria (Countertenor)

Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

Chorus

The Lord gave the word, great was the company of the preachers.

Aria (Duet and Chorus)

How beautiful are the feet of Him that bringeth glad tidings of salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth! Break forth into joy!

Arioso (Tenor)

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Aria (Bass)

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and His Anointed.

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

Recitative (Tenor)

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision.

Aria (Tenor)

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Chorus

Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah.

PART THE THIRD

Aria (Soprano)

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, And tho' worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. I know that my Redeemer liveth, for now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.

Chorus

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Recitative, accompanied (Bass)

Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

Aria (Bass)

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Recitative (Countertenor)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallow'd up in victory.

Duet (Countertenor and Tenor)

O Death, where is Thy sting? O Grave, where is Thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

Chorus

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aria (Soprano)

If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.

Chorus

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Chorus

Amen.

An upstanding tradition—and why we ask you to refrain from it

The "Hallelujah" chorus often makes audiences want to jump to their feet, says Artistic Director Christopher Hogwood. However, the custom of rising for the opening of the "Hallelujah" chorus prevents listeners from hearing some of Handel's finest handiwork.

Part Two of *Messiah* is a masterpiece of construction, not least the gathering momentum and constant sense of surprise during the last fifteen minutes. From the bass outburst of "Why do the nations so furiously rage together?" through to the final declaration that God will break his enemies "like a potter's vessel: Hallelujah," the sequence of mood and tempi is wonderfully sustained.

Nothing is more telling of Handel's dramatic mastery than the opening bars of the "Hallelujah" Chorus. It begins without demonstration — no trumpets, drums, or even voices; simply the sound of the string orchestra. When the chorus does enter, with demonstrations of how diversely the word "Hallelujah" can be accented, the trumpets and drums are still unheard. Handel is incorporating in this finale all the intimations of the

gradual spread of gospel jubilation — from initial subdued wordlessness to full triumph.

Since there is no indication at the start of the chorus that anything unusual is about to happen, the ritual of hundreds of listeners suddenly gathering and rising to their feet manages to obliterate those first important orchestral bars, and there must be many first time listeners who never manage to hear the opening of the chorus and must consequently still be wondering what it is all about!

With the help of the H&H audiences, we can return Handel's masterpiece to being a living, surprising and "new-minted" experience. It simply means restraining your enthusiasm for a few moments more, letting Handel have his way, and then springing up *after* the final chord.

— Christopher Hogwood

ORCHESTRA

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Daniel Stepner,
concertmaster
Anne Black
Judith Eissenberg
Gerald Itzkoff
Jane Starkman
Julie Leven
Clayton Hoener
Kinloch Earle

Violin II

Linda Quan,
principal
Danielle Maddon
Mark Beaulieu
Lena Wong
James Johnston
Etsuko Sakakeeny

Viola

David Miller,
principal
Laura Jeppesen
Barbara Wright
Susan Seeber

Cello

Karen Kaderavek,
principal
Alice Robbins
Jan Pfeiffer
Reinmar Seidler

Bass

Thomas Coleman,
principal
Anne Trout

Oboe

Stephen Hammer,
principal
Marc Schachman
Frederick Cohen
Jane Lewis

Timpani

John Grimes

Harpsichord

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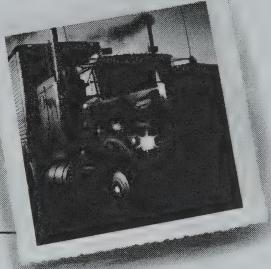
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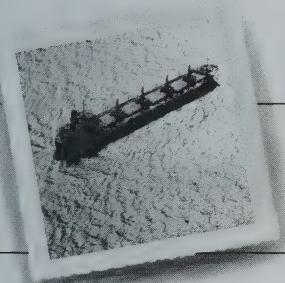
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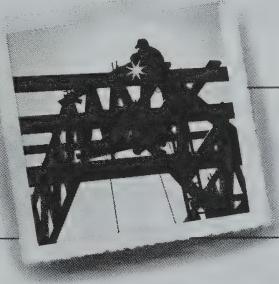
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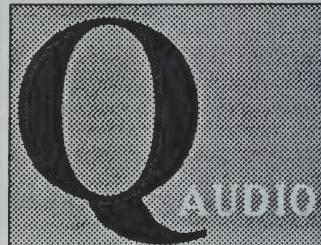
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